The Farmer's Role in the Food System

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The farmer can, and probably will, be taken out of the equation when his utility is gone. We have been left in the equation (food chain) because we provide land, labor, and other inputs at a lower cost than the big boys in the chain (big AG, food processing, food service companies) can provide for themselves.

I recently tried to do a graphic to depict this (I was not creative enough).

A small number (monopoly), of big ag companies (think Monsanto, CF Industries, John De etc), sell patented inputs (technology) at high retail prices to farmers & ranchers. Then, after

farmers and ranchers buy retail name brand products, they use them to produce cheap commodity products. Federal subsidy programs manage the supply of farm commodities, keeping these prices cheap at the farm gate.

The farmer provides, at below cost, labor, management, and the land, which are the most capital intensive inputs.

A few big ag companies (monopoly) buy these commodities from the farmer at below his cost of production. They then turn the cheap raw commodity items into highly processed products. (think Cargill, Tyson, Smithville, ADM, etc). A few big food companies buy the value-added and aggregated products from big ag (think Pepsico, Coca Cola, Nestle, etc). These companies sell branded, high-value products to big grocery stores (think Walmart, Costco, Kroger, etc), and consumers pay retail price for name-brand food products.

You may have met people that seem to “suck all the air out of a room”. When they are around, there is no room for anyone else to speak. In the context of our corrupted food system, monopolies “suck” all of the money out of the system...on both sides of the farmer.

Using the equipment, the farmer produces commodity products, providing labor, management, and the land.

These commodity products are price-regulated by federal subsidy programs to keep the prices low at the farm gate.

Coca-Cola PERDUE Kellogg's Smithfield PEPSICO

Big AG companies turn these commodities into highly-processed products.

US. FOODS Sysco amazon COSTCO WHOLESALE Kroger Walmart Save money. Live better.

Food companies buy these value-added products and turn them into

Even with the current system so heavily benefiting the monopolistic corporations, they still want more. The local farmer gets pushed and squeezed until all ability to make profit is gone. The current momentum is pushing farmers out of the market, removing them from the equation to make room for industrialized and corrosive production models.

If left alone, the tech and agriculture elite will take complete control of the food supply, through the advancements of genome modifying, editing, and patenting. These patented seeds will be grown indoors, with vertical farming, in which food is grown on top of itself instead of spread out horizontally:

Vertical faming will spike food costs, increase energy expenditures, limit the diversity within the available produce, and **effectively cut the farmer out of the food system permanently.** The further away that we step from nature and its superior process, the worse off we become. In supporting these large corporations over smaller, more honest farmers, we risk losing the life out of our land and our seas. We must be intentional with our purchasing power and understand the impact it has.

This is not just a theory, this has begun. If there was ever a time to know your farmer, it is now.

Will.

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